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Vol. II. BOSTON, JANUARY, 1889. No. 1.

"Our part is to conspire with the new works of new days."---Emerson.

THE NEW IDEAL

A Journal of Constructive Liberal Thought and Applied Ethics.

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THE NEW IDEAL.

JAMES H. WEST, ... Editor.

Printed and Published by
The New Ideal Book and Printing Company,
HATHAWAY BUILDING, 620 Atlantic Avenue,
BOSTON, MASS.

THE object of THE NEW IDEAL is the discovery and propagation of constructive liberal thought, and the application of modern ethical ideals to the increasing problems of human need. This work it will deem Religion. It will feel, moreover, that there is no religion higher or more necessary; for this, on its thought side, will be the establishing of ethics and religion on a scientific basis,—a consummation which a rapidly increasing number of the world's earnest workers are more and more, every year now, demanding and endeavoring; and on its practical side it will be the augmenting of the sum of human good.

The actual needs of mankind in the present day are so widely different, in many ways, from mankind's supposed needs in the past; the changed basis of modern knowledge from the basis of older systems is so complete; to those who are able to see there is so much more of beauty and helpfulness in the New and nearer True than in the still-prevalent religious fantasies of the child-world, that the editor deems there will be place and room for the paper. And with the unsurpassed list of contributors which he is able to print elsewhere, he is confident THE NEW IDEAL will never lack either in interest or value.

A word concerning our title-phrase: Mankind's old ideal was a supposed supernatural revelation; the authority of tradition and creed; a life in accord with speculative dogma. The New Ideal, as mankind is slowly coming to comprehend and formulate it, is a naturally acquired knowledge; the authority of the nature of things; a life in harmony with the universe's highest discoverable energies. Our title thus hints forcibly, and in three words, the whole high basis of the world's modern nobler thought and activity.

What is said of "The New Ideal."

[From Judge J. W. NORTH, Oleander, Cal.]

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[From a reader in Dakota.]

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[From a liberal worker in Arkansas.]

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[From Wm. J. Potter.]

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ALSO (we hope) the first of an important series of Essays, by Dr. Francis E. Abbot, from the Constructive side of Liberalism,—to which series his article in the present issue may well be deemed introductory.

VARIOUS other papers of interest,—articles by Mr. Buckley, Mr. Whipple, and others,—with the usual poetry, book-reviews, and editorial matters.

WE desire (with many others) that THE NEW IDEAL may shortly be made a weekly, or at least a fortnightly. We will be glad of a general expression of views in the matter,—and of the subscriptions which shall make the more frequent issue possible.

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An aged man, a physician,—of whom we know nothing except that he ordered a copy of the book,—writes: "I have read with delight the little book, 'Uplifts of Heart and Will.' I am now nearly 62 years of age, and have lived a lonely life as regards the satisfying of my liberal religious aspirations. Your little book fills a void in my soul's loneliness which I have suffered for more than 40 years."

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THE NEW IDEAL

A Journal of Constructive Liberal Thought and Applied Ethics.

VOL. II. BOSTON, JANUARY, 1889. No. 1.

EDITORIAL.

ALPHA AND OMEGA.

DIM in the dark Æonian caves,
Deep in the Night of earliest Time,
There trembled low beneath the waves
A mimic protoplasmic sphere,—
A globule small, whose curve severe
Bore in its heart a germ sublime.

Naught else in all the universe
Such germ possessed as glowed in this;
A germ whose warmth would soon disperse
The gloom which bound earth's silent corse:
The germ sublime of deathless Force!—
Earth's mystery of mysteries.

Lichens and moss now found a place—
Or whence or how, what tongue may tell?
And ferns and grasses filled the space
Where erst dull clods and dust had been;
While rustling leaves, with lips unseen,
Called to the ages, "All is well."

Lizards and dragons,—monstrous forms,—
Sights that men's eyes would shrink to see!
Shrieks above elemental storms!—
Ah! through what pain was life evolved!
Only through death and conquest solved,—
Struggle and blood and agony.

But see! a kindlier hour should come!
Rapine and force sank, shrinking, low;
Thought, invention, showed fairer sum.
Hither came Man!—yes, crude indeed,
But climbing to heart and mind with speed.
On him the gods their best bestow.

Love, aspiration,—powers sublime!
Sympathy, help,—these Now have place.
O for the years of Coming Time!—
What shall they bring of better yet?
Courage! not yet man's sun is set!
Good is in store for all the race.

1886. JAMES H. WEST.

GENERAL TOPICS.

PERFECTED ICONOCLASM.

THE desire and intention of THE NEW IDEAL, in the beginning of this its new endeavor, is in large part admirably epitomized in the following wise word from a late issue of *Unity*. We commend such high message to all our contributors:

The triumph of shattering a false worshiper's idol is far less than that of so enlightening him that he shall himself voluntarily take it down.

THE PERMANENT AND THE IMPORTANT.

No worker in the cause of liberalism shall ever permanently prosper in his work, or be of large use to men, who is not content to work on long lines, and who does not strive to touch fundamentals. Temporizing is never of real worth; we must *give up* everything that hinders. And surface-work is largely child's-play; we must go deep down. The universe is not on the side of the transient and the trivial; it is on the side of the permanent and the important.

SOMETHING LIBERALS MUST GIVE UP.

ONE of the things that liberal workers must speedily determine to give up, if they are really to benefit the world, is their present prevalent use of many old and important words with altogether new meanings, the old meanings being gone from them forever for the person using them, however much hearers or readers may think the old thing is still meant. Two such words meet editorial remark in the book-review department of this issue, under the heading, "Show us the Father."

"PRACTICAL RELIGION."

THE Christian church continues, to-day, to hold the place it does in modern life, far more by virtue of the growing application of its energies to practical humanitarianism, than to any of its retentions of old-time Nature-dreams. Moreover, when the earnest propagator of Christianity himself forgets, for a moment, as he does occasionally, his theology and ecclesiasticism, he can be as "rational" as the most rational. Reasonableness is getting to be a sweet habit of the race's blood. We know of no Boanerges of the liberal faith who, on the anvil of modern need, could pound out with sturdier Anglo-Saxon blows a keener sword for a home-thrust, than the following blade added lately to the growing working-armament of *Zion's Herald* (Methodist):

The proof that a man has been redeemed will be found, not at the end of his tongue, but in the issue of his life. He will be a manly man, and an active. The age of religious gush is about ended. It is an open secret that one may gush and gush and still be a deceitful sinner or a troublesome drone in the church. We cannot afford to take the evidence of a warm lip against the evidence of a cold life. If you love your neighbor you can deal with him squarely, treat him decently, and help him when he needs it. All our religion comes to application. By their fruits—not by the length of their tongues—ye shall know them. The vast work of the church calls for converted men—converted enough to get down to hard, every-day work. This work can be done at home, in the shop, the field, or the ship. The talking part of the church doubts whether other men are converted. But are the talkers themselves converted? The question is a shocking one, no doubt, but a shock is sometimes a blessing.

WORD FROM MR. SPENCER.

IT may be worth the while of all students of the Evolution theory to read, among our book-notices in this issue, the word concerning the present winter's work of the Brooklyn Ethical Association. So great an interest has the proposed Brooklyn series of papers called forth on the part of Mr. Spencer himself, that the following letter has been received from him, touching also on the matter of his personal health. To all who desire the completion of Mr. Spencer's great self-set task,—the formulating of his comprehensive system of philosophy entire,—every word of a personal nature from him has value:

DEAR SIR: I am obliged by your letter with its inclosures. I am glad to say, and you will perhaps be glad to hear, that I am considerably better than when I gave to Dr. W. J. Youmans the impression you quote. I am now in hopes of getting back to something like a low level of health, though I scarcely expect to reach that amount of working power which has been usual with me.

The information contained in your letter was, I need hardly say, gratifying to me both on personal and on public grounds. The spread of the doctrine of Evolution, first of all in its limited acceptation, and now in its wider acceptation, is alike surprising and encouraging; and doubtless the movement now to be initiated by the lectures and essays set forth in your programme will greatly accelerate its progress—especially if full reports of your proceedings can be circulated in a cheap printed form. The mode of presentation described seems to me admirably adapted for popularizing evolution views, and it will, I think, be a great pity if the effect of such a presentation should be limited to a few listeners in Brooklyn.

Wishing you and your coadjutors every success in your efforts, I am Truly yours,

MR. J. A. SKILTON. HERBERT SPENCER.

THE TABLES TURNED.

NOTWITHSTANDING its accustomed and all but unfailing generosity of spirit, the *Christian Union* grudges to read, in "Robert Elsmere," of liberal religion even once "prospering," while Orthodoxy and "the church" come off second best. "There came a time," the novel reads, "when, instead of meeting criticism by argument, Robert was able simply to point to accomplished facts. 'Go amongst our men, talk to our children,' he would say, and satisfy yourself.'" To which the *Union* jubilantly replies:

> We wait for that time to come! Meanwhile we note the fact that a Christless Christian Brotherhood exists only in the imagination of one ingenious romancer. 'Robert Elsmere' puts the religion of humanitarianism in a very attractive guise, but not more charmingly than Renan has done in his 'Life of Jesus,' and the moral effect will be the same — nothing.

The *Christian Union* forgets that, right in its own city, the "religion of humanity," under the leadership of Prof. Adler, is to-day touching more nearly and practically the life and need of the common people than any "church religion" in the metropolis. And the throngs that on Sunday attend Prof. Adler's lectures; the numberless individuals in personal need helped by him daily to new hope and to the opportunity for new endeavor, — leaving him, in their importunity, hardly leisure for his meals; the increasing "classes" of young men and young women going from his training schools and industrial schools to battle intelligently, skilfully, and bravely with the world, all prove that the "effect" of the "religion of humanitarianism" is really, to-day, much farther from "nothing" than is the slowly waning misapprehension of religion the *Christian Union* itself still upholds.

TOLERATION.

THERE is much supposed religion that is really irreligion. Hate is irreligion; intolerance is irreligion. And if they be "religious" hate and "religious" intolerance, so much deeper their real irreligious dye. Indeed, we know of no greater possible irreligion than intolerance. Many so-called "crimes" — sudden outbursts of passion, surgings of hot blood, out-flashings of the residue of untamed "animalism" in man — are light and trivial in comparison. There is nothing of pure wilfulness in them. But the spirit of intolerance — what is it but the spirit of selfishness, of hate? While the spirit of real religion is the spirit of love.

There is much even of (self-denominated) "liberal" religion that is intolerant. So far, however, as it is intolerant it is not religious, nor liberal, but irreligious and illiberal, pride itself never so highly. Much of "Universalism" to-day (in the person of its accredited leaders) is intolerant. So of much of "Unitarianism." So of much of "Free Religion." Join hands, brothers! The world needs all of us, — and needs that we shall pull together. Truly, let us rebuke where rebuke seems necessary. (Is it necessary as often as we think? To rebuke, moreover, is not to sneer; nor is to rebuke to ridicule.) But men in need are crying out to us! Working together, and in sympathy and earnestness helping rather than too heedlessly and too often criticizing, perchance we might meet that need! Happy consummation! worth, — yes, worth, to realize, the high withholding of even "our" occasional keen (caustic?) "witticism" at some sincere brother's expense, or a hundred miserable cutting unkindnesses.

ATTACK.

THE ink is hardly dry upon the sheets where we have written the brief editorial headed "Toleration," before we find ourself impelled to acknowledge it highly difficult, many times, to be assured that continuous unruffled patience amid religious differences is not a crime rather than a virtue; highly difficult not to feel, often, that we really *ought* to go in and "fight." When a friendly contributor wrote, a few hours since, "I am preparing an article, 'Should Free Thought be Aggressive?' — advocating agitation, attack. Is that too strong for you?" we replied, mildly hinting the many purely constructive topics open and waiting for rational treatment. But what shall we say when we find, going the rounds of the press, such items as that which follows, just fallen under our eye, — a report of what the "Rev." George S. Bishop, D.D., one of the "pastors" of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, uttered in a recent address? —

> "Doctor Bishop said that it was commonly claimed that the church was growing more liberal and changing its beliefs; that the old-fashioned theology was going out of date. He said that his church stood on the old-fashioned platform. There was not a divergence of the millionth of an inch — not a fraction of a hair's breadth from the views of Calvin, to all of which he could heartily say, Amen. The creed and the doctrine was the same old-fashioned one taught at Geneva."

"We are apt to congratulate this present age," comments the paper from which we quote the above, "on the fact that Calvinism is virtually dead. But the Dutch Reformed Church in America still retains the Belgic Confession of 1561 as its doctrinal standard."

If, notwithstanding our "mild suggestion," as aforesaid, the "aggressive" essay referred to should nevertheless be sent us, arriving before we go to press, we are not sure that a place in our pages may not be accorded it! May growing critical and scientific research, however, and the spirit of a developed human nobility among religious workers as a whole, the world over, free all men soon from the *occasion* for the dilemmas and hesitances which beset us all continually, when we meet in each other the survivals of barbaric, child-world "beliefs"! Only through *clearer thought* can nearer true beliefs come.

OUR NEW ENDEAVOR.

WHEN in the growing dawn of men's consciousness of higher need an orb which has been to them as the herald of the day sinks below the horizon, grief, disappointment, an increased sense of the acuteness of their need, presses upon them; — until, sooner or later, the same or a similar star again arises, and the desired day is once more felt to be sure. Such an orb as this, surely without exaggeration we may say, was *The Index*, — an orb unique, light-giving, prophetic. Its passage, in December of 1886, brought to many hundreds the sense of deep loss. How it was loved and respected the numberless letters received by its editors, and by others interested, since its demise, abundantly testify; — letters not only from all over the United States, but also from many parts of Europe, — and invariably voicing esteem and regret. Shall any new paper ever fully replace *The Index?* Perhaps not. At any rate, none has yet done so. With this issue, however, THE NEW IDEAL hopefully assumes the task, — happier than it can say, and assured of worth, in that it not only has the hearty co-operation, in its new endeavor, of almost the entire former list of *Index* contributors, but also the generous word and aid of the loyal founder of *The Index* himself, and of the editors in charge at he time of its suspension.

And we have little question of the reception we shall meet. In a recent letter to the editor of THE NEW IDEAL, the leader of one of the present prosperous Societies for Ethical Culture said: "I owe far more to *The Index* than to all the other papers that were ever published." Another prominent worker and contributor speaks thus: "As I wrote Mr. Underwood not long ago, I never knew how I loved *The Index* till it had gone and [the hoped-for succession to the same] proved abortive." Many of the letters in the list of correspondence elsewhere printed speak similar words. That the field, moreover, two years ago vacated, has not yet been satisfactorily filled, the sentences from the letters on another page also evidence. One quotation, only, here: An active liberal worker and author, and former

valued contributor to *The Index*, now on our own list, writes lately (we do not print this part of his letter under his own name, in the page of correspondence elsewhere, lest some of our valiant contemporaries in the more iconolastic liberal work should deem him and us ungenerous): "I am very glad to hear of your purpose to replace *The Index*. Such a paper is very much needed, for there is now no liberal paper in the United States that combines rationalism with scholarship and refinement, so as to be a suitable means of propagandism with cultured Christians. I shall be glad to aid in such a work." So others.

Thus both the desire for such a paper as THE NEW IDEAL proposes to be, and the place and need for it, seem present. The coöperation of subscribers and friends, alone, remains to be secured. For contents and tone, the list of helpers and contributors, as printed on the first page of the cover, insures the journal's permanent value, interest, and high character. And for the policy of the paper, — its basis of thought and work,— this will be found in the standing paragraphs on the title-page, under the heading, "The Object of THE NEW IDEAL." Nothing, here, needs to be added, we think, on this point. Issue to issue, only, shall prove the wisdom and earnestness of our work.

A single point further: Says one of our correspondents, in the printed list: "I presume the absolute freedom of THE NEW IDEAL." And another, in words not elsewhere used: "If your paper is to be as *all-round* free and broad as was *The Index*," then etc., etc.

THE NEW IDEAL free? Yes, free in the freedom which is constructive and virtue-loving, and of human help. *Not* free to coarseness, or flippancy, or mere destructiveness: others may find such work as this latter still congenial, still necessary even; we do not say that much of it is not still necessary: "People *need* to be shocked," said the sainted Lucretia Mott. But this is not the main work of THE NEW IDEAL. Not free, therefore, to crudeness or triviality, or to iconoclasm pure and simple, — for iconoclasm's sake. But forever free to broadest search, to deepest study, to widest outlook, however variant from the editor's own personal thought on one side, or from any extant conventional "religious" thought on the other. Free to upbuilding *Thought*; free to *Human Helpfulness*.

And so, a welcome to all, to these pages; and a hearty, grateful word to those who, gladly and generously, have helped to make our first issue under the new style one of the worth and promise which we feel the present issue evidences.

ESSAY.

For *The New Ideal*.

CREATIVE LIBERALISM.

BY FRANCIS E. ABBOT, PH.D.

IN its relation to religion, the century now drawing to its close is emphatically the AGE OF AGNOSTICISM. All the leaders of its characteristic thought have more or less consciously, more or less completely, broken with Christianity, — that is, broken with that venerable theory of the universe for which the Christian theology and the Christian church have definitely stood for nearly two thousand years. But these leaders are paralyzed when it comes to constructive thought. They have no other theory of the universe to propose; they aim at none; they agree, if they agree on anything, that no theory of the universe is possible. What is known as the "philosophy of evolution," certainly so far as its great champions and expounders are concerned, strictly limits itself to a mere knowledge of "phenomena," and strictly denies all possible knowledge of "noumena"; it formulates a mode of happening, a uniformity of process, a law of co-existence and sequence, but claims to demonstrate the impossibility of comprehending ultimate causes, or of arriving at any theory of the universe as an intelligible unity. Whether the phenomenal universe is the product of intelligence or of unintelligence,—whether the human being is a creative first cause or a mere link in an endless and eternal chain of effects, and whether his conscious existence ceases at death or continues beyond the grave,—all these vital questions, fundamental to any real theory of the universe, it declares to be necessarily and absolutely unanswerable. God, Freedom, and Immortality, the supreme interests of human thought and human life alike,— these, to the evolution-philosophy in its present form, are insoluble problems, the eternal rock-barriers of the ever-restless ocean of human speculation. Every form of the evolution-philosophy which is founded on "the Unknowable" is founded on agnosticism, or denial of the possibility of any comprehensive theory of the universe; and agnosticism is the prevalent philosophy of liberalism in the nineteenth century.

This statement needs no proof, for it simply records a fact of observation, patent to every onlooker. A single significant illustration of it is enough.

The two most successful novels of the past summer hinge on the conflict between traditional Christianity and modern liberalism. In "Robert Elsmere" and in "John Ward, Preacher," portraits are painted of the modern liberal, as seen by keen-eyed observers; and in each case the liberal is an agnostic.

Says Robert Elsmere, only a few days before his death: "I often lie here, Flaxman, wondering at the way in which men become the slaves of some metaphysical word—*personality*, or *intelligence*, or what not! What meaning can they have as applied to *God?* Herbert Spencer is quite right. We no sooner attempt to define what we mean by a Personal God than we lose ourselves in labyrinths of language and logic. But why attempt it at all? I like that French saying: '*Quand on me demande ce que c'est que Dieu, je l'ignore; quand on ne me le demande pas, je le sais très-bien!*' No, we cannot realize Him in words — we can only live in Him, and die to Him!"

Helen Ward expresses no less clearly the same bewilderment and defeat of thought: "But, after all, this question of eternal punishment is such a little thing, so on the outside of the great puzzle! One goes in, and in: Why is sin, which is its own punishment, in the world at all? What does it all mean, anyhow? Where is God, and why does He let us suffer here, with no certainty of a life hereafter? Why does He make love and death in the same world? Oh, that is so cruel,— love and death together! Is He, at all? Those are the things, it seems to me, one has to think about. But why do I go over it all? We can't get away from it, can we?" And again: "To some of us God is only another name for the power of good,— or, one might as well say force, and that is blind and impersonal; there is nothing comforting or tender in the thought of force. How do you suppose the conviction of the personality of God is reached?" And once again, when, after the death of her beloved husband, a friend tries to comfort her by saying — "It is so much happier for him now; he must see so clearly; and the old grief is lost in joy," — Helen answered wearily: "No, you must not say those things to me. I cannot feel them. I am glad he has no pain; in an eternal sleep there is at least no pain. But I must just wait my life out, Gifford. I cannot hope; I dare not. I could not go on living, if I thought he were living somewhere, and needing me. No, it is ended. I have had my life."

The deep pathos of these two noble works of fiction, far truer to life as it is than many so-called biographies, lies in the remorseless fidelity with which, perhaps unconsciously and unintentionally, they expose the intellectual beggarliness of liberalism in its present unfledged state. Such dearth of great ideas, such piteous poverty of comprehension, as is exhibited in the mental condition of these two typical liberals, simply shows that liberalism, so far as it claims to be the custodian of high truth, is to-day infinitely

inferior to the Christian mythology which it has displaced. Periods of revolution are doubtless necessary, but only by way of transition to periods of higher construction; and, if liberalism could by any possibility fall permanently into the arrested development of agnosticism, it would be no heir of the future. Robert Elsmere and Helen Ward, lovely and noble as personal characters, represent, as agnostic thinkers, the lowest and crudest, because the least intellectual, type of liberalism. It is an awful tragedy of the human soul, when its holiest affections and impulses and aspirations, guided no longer by the ancient superstitions which, in whatever coarse and prickly envelope, contained nevertheless most precious *thoughts*, are bereft of all other guidance, gasping for life in the exhausted receiver of mere *vacuity of thought*.

This merely negative attitude of mind, this emptiness of all positive ideas respecting the supreme problems which man is set to solve, is indeed the present characteristic of liberalism, but only because liberalism is at the very beginning of its career. Agnosticism, in itself considered, is nothing but intellectual bewilderment, confusion of thought, a merely temporary defeat and despair of human reason in the presence of questions which it has not yet learned how to answer. When liberalism once comes to understand itself, — when it once discovers how to go to work, how to handle these questions, how to synthesize the facts and laws which modern science has established beyond reasonable doubt,— then it will see its way clear to a theory of the universe founded upon modern knowledge, and will no longer fancy its mission to mankind discharged by merely overthrowing a theory of the universe founded upon ancient superstition. The era of constructive or creative liberalism is fated to come; and what it will create is necessarily a new theory of the universe, without which no religious movement can live. The real moral of "Robert Elsmere" and "John Ward, Preacher," has been as yet drawn by no one; the real lesson of the helpless and hopeless liberalism they too justly depict is deeper than any of the critics have as yet perceived. Briefly put, it is this: *men must either learn to think more profoundly, or else unlearn to feel.*

That is the dilemma to which agnosticism reduces the human spirit. If all knowledge of God, Freedom, and Immortality is impossible to man, the only escape from intolerable anguish, in the constant presence of pain and death, must lie in a stoical suppression of the power to feel — in a desperate resolve to think and feel no more, but to extinguish all deep thought and all high feeling through frantic self-absorption in the soulless details of life. Yet what an impossible escape! In every noble nature, deep thought and high feeling have become a necessity; the only possible escape for such lies in deeper thought and higher feeling. Here is revealed the supreme duty of modern liberalism to press resolutely forward, away from agnosticism, to a positive, scientific, all-comprehensive theory of the universe. It is infinitely false that such a theory is unattainable. The agnosticism which professes to prove its unattainability is nothing but one of two things — either intellectual imbecility or intellectual cowardice. The one unpardonable sin of the intellect is to despair of itself. Liberalism has always stood for *freedom* — freedom from dogma and freedom from ecclesiastical control. Well and good: let it always stand for that! But now it must stand for *truth as well*, and for the power of human reason to attain the truth. To liberalism alone can poor humanity, losing day by day its hold upon the Christian theory of the universe, look for a new theory that may guide its thought and life. The paramount duty of construction and creation to which liberalism is now called is that of working out such a theory, bravely, hopefully, patiently, reverently, devotedly; and THE NEW IDEAL will justify itself to the world, if it proves itself to be that *New Thought* which is the world's deepest and most imperative need.

GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

THE NEW IDEAL IN RELIGION.

You ask me, my dear Mr. West, for a contribution for the first issue of THE NEW IDEAL in Boston. Allow me to send, in lieu of a formal article, my congratulations to the cause of liberal religion on the enthusiasm and courage that have led you to embark in this journalistic enterprise. Never since *The Index* vanished, nearly two years ago, have I ceased to believe that in due time a new man would appear in Boston, with fresh hope and faith, ready for another literary venture, like that of Morse with *The Radical* and Abbot with *The Index*. And you have now come to make good my belief. If you do not foresee all the obstacles which you may have to encounter, no matter for that. I know that you come with a fervor of conviction and a self-sacrificing devotedness that deserve to overcome all obstacles. I know, too, that a great number from the old constituency of *The Index* and from the membership of the Free Religious Association, in and around Boston and elsewhere, will most heartily welcome your effort. Not only for your own sake, but for the sake of what you yourself put first — the principles which you stand for — may your brave venture win friends and means, and have all success!

I think you have a specially happy name for your paper. It is positive and full of significance. It points to the constructive side of liberal religious thought. It gives a glimpse of the goal toward which free thought is leading. The enlarged science of the time, particularly the doctrine of evolution, is actually bringing to the human mind a New Ideal in religion. It is revolutionizing the old theology; and it is doing it so thoroughly that there is little destructive work of any other kind remaining to be done in the theological realm. But it is also introducing a new conception of Eternal Power and of man's relation thereto; a new conception, too, of humanity, and of the place and responsibility of humanity in the work of the universe; and hence a new conception of religion both on the theoretical and the practical side.

I am one of those who think that religion is to remain as one of the permanent vital forces in the world. Hitherto, from the very beginning of human history, one of the strongest, most conspicuous, and most constant motive powers among mankind, has been the religious motive, — or that nexus of thought, feeling, and act by which man is bound (or thinks himself bound) to the greater Being or Power whence his own being and power are derived. This motive has been encumbered with vast superstitions, clogged by false and pernicious doctrines, and directed often to anything but beneficent ends. Yet, in spite of all aberrations, it has had a persistent power only equaled by the motives which have produced the institutions of marriage, and government, and commerce. I cannot think that a force like this is easily to pass away from human society. Rather must I believe that it represents a constitutionally inherent attribute of human nature; and that, when enlightened by a rational philosophy and thus directed to the normal fulfilment of its office, it becomes the very highest motive of which the human mind is capable.

It is true that the authority and power of certain creeds and ceremonials, which are by many minds regarded as identical with religion itself, are passing away, or have already gone. They vanish before the light of new knowledge, and we can only be glad for such emancipation. But if we define religion, not by any creeds or ceremonials which have at any time been framed to express it, but as the vital and inevitable relation between finite human power and Infinite Power, between the intelligence of man and the actual truth of things, between the will of man and a universal Law of Right, then, since man can never by any possibility outgrow this relation nor escape from it, it follows that he can never get away from the obligations

which it imposes upon him. Nay, the more knowledge he acquires and the broader in consequence becomes his life and the more extended his activities, the greater the light that is then thrown upon his relation to the Eternal Power and the more momentous his responsibility. The old belief that pictured Jehovah declaring the commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai and as speaking to the prophets from the heavens with a "Thus saith the Lord," did not bring the Eternal so intimately close to earth, nor make its behests so vital a reality to mankind, as does the doctrine now sustained by science, of the constant immanence of Eternal Being and Power in humanity. And if the old belief sent men into the world, to battle with error and evil, as if commissioned from "on high," still more should this new belief, which teaches that our common faculties of reason, conscience, and heart are veritable vitalizations of the Infinite Energy, lead to the devoutest consecration and effort worthily to use them, and in increasing measure, for their highest service.

The new doctrine does not limit Divine Incarnation to one miraculously born man, but sees it as a natural process in the evolution of life. It teaches that there is, at least, a germ of creative Deity in all beings who have risen to the possibilities of moral intelligence and moral determination. It used to be taught that Deity had revealed truth through certain penmen from whom mankind at large must take it at second hand; that the moral law had been given in the same way. But when, as now, we have learned to think of Deity as the very substance of Truth itself, as the very energy within us that draws us to Righteousness, as the very power that "wells up" in our natures as moral consciousness and that leads us to the altars of sacrifice of all merely selfish loves for the sake of universal well-being, then we have found a phase of religion that can dominate and exalt the soul to-day, no less than did the beliefs that summoned ancient heroism to its tasks.

Wm. J. Potter.

THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT.

The first and great commandment of the new faith concerns human aspirations and human duties. It knows nothing of an offended God or a fall of man. It sees in evil the natural result of man's imperfect knowledge of the laws of the universe and his imperfect moral purpose to conform himself to those laws. The child ignorant of his own nature falls into demoralizing habits; the adult walking in some untried path goes astray. Deafness, dumbness, internal diseases, the dreaded results of scarlet fever, come most frequently, not where there is the least profession of belief about another life, but where there is the least knowledge, and opportunity for observance, of the laws of this life. Deficient mental integrity is traceable, not to one's failure to accept a given view of creative power, but to the habit of compromising with one's own thoughts, and fear of the logic of one's own principles. Bad habits are no less frequent among church-members, than among those who belong to the army of doubters and dissenters. They are due rather to ignorance of sound ethical rules and lack of will-power in applying them.

It is simply incompleteness of character and life from which, individually and socially, we need to be delivered. Men have not yet learned how to live the life of the spirit; they are ignorant of the great laws of justice and equity; they are not wise enough to place the discordant notes of varied attainments, varied tastes, varied moral purposes, side by side, and out of it all to produce the harmony of a well-mixed state. They are feeling their way; they are conquering slowly but surely, through their failures and defeats, as well as through their successes and victories. Theirs is a constant attempt to overcome impediment; to send up the shoots of new desires; to bear the buds of new resolutions; to produce the blossoms of new attainments. This is the way in which the individual grows better; this is the way in which society moves up and on.

What then is the first and great commandment of the new faith? Plainly this:—If you are a lover, make this earth better by the character of your love. If you are the founder of a home, make this earth better by the character of the atmosphere you create therein. If you are a parent, make this earth better by the way in which you call new life into being, and surround it with holy influences. Realize that for good or for ill you are a member of society; that for good or for ill you pursue your avocation; that for good or for ill you are a citizen; that what you are, what you make yourself, that you will help others to become.

There is no theology, no ecclesiasticism, no *formal* worship in all this. But think of a world in which the predominating motive should be, to live our best and to help every other human being to live his best. Would it not be in the very best sense a religious world? The right of every child to be well-born—that is the word of inspiration, the word of prophecy. The right of every child to the largest possible opportunity for the development of the faculties which are his—this is a message from the skies. No distinctions in human government on account of race, color or sex; co-operation in industry; love even for the occupant of the prison-cell,—these are the new forms of the golden rule. Human aspiration, human service, human fellowship,—what need of more where these warm the heart and animate the life?

From every sect of christendom; from far beyond the limits of the Christian communion, is coming a new and growing emphasis of the thought, that we want heaven here, unity here, the godlike here. As one after another of the old fallacies are sloughed off, the new faith will appear in all its saving beauty.

"'Tis coming, yes, 'tis coming,"—

the church of humanity; the commonwealth of man. For one, my sleep is not disturbed by the cry that religion is gone, because the sects have lost much of their power and the creeds are decaying. I see new ideals of justice, truth, beauty, becoming the redeemers of the world, and I go forward assured that this land of mine is holy land; that these days of mine are holy days. Without fear, and with a thankful heart,

"I feel the earth move sunward,
I join the great march onward,
Fore-reach the good to be,
And share the victory."

Frederic A. Hinckley.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR.

In 1864 there was published, by Walker, Wise & Co., in Boston, the first volume of a work by E. L. Frothingham (a brother of W. L. Frothingham) and Arthur (his son), entitled "Philosophy as Absolute Science," being an attempt to reconstruct philosophy. It dealt with the problems of Ontology. Had the volume attracted attention it was to have been followed by two others (the authors were Trinitarians), one on theology, and one on psychology. The fundamental idea of the work was the real existence of a realm of evil, "a dualistic universe outside of God, in which good is set against evil, life against death, and light against darkness." The bearing of this conception on Orthodox Christianity is obvious. It legitimates Satan, Hell, Depravity, Sin, Redemtion, Atonement, and almost every other "Christian" dogma. It was vehemently "evangelical," but not in any traditional way. On the contrary, it claimed to be pre-eminently scientific, rational, thoughtful.

Mr. Frothingham, the elder, died some years ago, leaving his manuscripts to his son, who now lives in Baltimore. The latter has recently issued a thin volume of seventy pages, called "Christian Philosophy," aimed principally at

the so-called "Broad Church" and the practice of putting modern, "anti-christian" ideas, based on Unitarianism, faith in human nature, trust in character, belief in progress, expectation from development, the doctrine of evolution, into the formularies of the church. The book is not the production of an experienced writer; but it is learned, candid, earnest and precise. The author succeeds in making clear the Orthodox beliefs, as well as in showing the heretical character of the current philosophy; and he makes a strong plea for integrity of faith. "The only hope for society," he says, "is in the new birth of Christianity in the consciousness, on its highest plane, or Christian philosophy; in the light of which the church, the State, the family and the individual may be reborn, and a Christian society be constituted in harmonious order from its highest to its lowest elements." Especially convincing is his statement of the absolute contrariety between new and old doctrine, and the disingenuousness of putting ancient labels on modern teachings. The scriptures (he allows) are *symbolical* books, veiling truths behind a figure; but the "articles" are plain, literal, addressed to the understanding, meant to *explain* truth, and therefore bearing but one sense. This would seem to render simple the duty of attaching only one signification to the words of a creed.

Mr. Frothingham, however, appears to think that it is enough that a belief is *heretical*, in order to condemn it. But it by no means follows that a thing is untrue because it is unorthodox. The reverse may be maintained. Especially if the new doctrine has been held before, in some guise, so much the more likely is the presumption of its tenability; and if the church has set upon it the seal of its reprobation, the *importance* of the doctrine is admitted.

It only remains to re-affirm the new, to expand it, to give it scientific sanction, to add to it knowledge, enthusiasm, aspiration, positiveness of affirmation, assurance of aim, to prove its constructive power. This must be done. This can be done. Let thinking men lend their thought, let believing men lend their faith, and the creed of Rationalism will eclipse every other. All we want is a fair, unencumbered field. Some of the Liberals are philosophers, some are preachers, some are men of letters, some are journalists. Let all combine heartily, and "Rationalism" will be a dignified, solid, persuasive, positive faith,—the faith of the future.

O. B. Frothingham.

THE EXILE.—A SONG.

The lightning is bright,
The billows are white,
As I sail out to sea.
My path is not known;
I go forth alone;
But I'm free: I am free!

Farewell, native land!
Farewell, tyrant band,
Kings of terrors and tears!
O Freedom, thy form
Shines bright 'mid the storm,
As it beamed all these years!

Beyond ocean's foam
I'll build me a home;
Toil and trial I'll hail;
And ne'er will I pause,
Till Liberty's cause
O'er all earth shall prevail!

F. M. Holland.

THE SQUIRE IN "ROBERT ELSMERE."

The author of "Robert Elsmere"—like another Mary to whom her Rabboni has first appeared—has been commissioned to tell the disciples that he is no more in the tomb of tradition: he is risen. She is publishing her tidings in many pulpits. Her figures bid fair to assume a quasi-allegorical shape, as if in a new Pilgrim's Progress. With most of her personages she has no doubt been personally acquainted; but unfortunately she would appear never to have known a freethinker of the scholarly and religious type. The Squire,—who seems to be the modern Giant Despair, in a Castle Skepticism with all the æsthetic improvements,—is surely a grotesque anomaly. A solitary scholar, oblivious, in his devotion to learning, of the joys his wealth might procure; spending the best energies of his life in mastering Greek, Hebrew, Latin, even Sanskrit, in order that he may thoroughly deal with historic religion and biblical criticism; devoting fifteen years to the writing of one volume of this character;—this man is yet represented as callous, cynical, unable to appreciate the conscientious scruples which withdraw Elsmere from the church whose creed he discredits, and, amid his scorn of supernaturalism, victimized by dread of his father's ghost! Such a combination one may confront as calmly as Cuvier did the masquerader who came as the Devil *to eat him*. "Horns—hoofs: graminivorous: it cannot be done." Such devotion to learning, to the search after truth, slighting enjoyments of sense through patient solitary years, imply refined enthusiasm, self-truthfulness, gentleness, humility. The iconoclastic, half-political, half-religious radicalism of Ingersoll and Bradlaugh—with all its value in clearing the way for the kingdom of Man, which is at hand—is largely a survival of revolutionary millennial Christianity. Bradlaugh is blowing the trump of Gabriel, and the battle of Armageddon is announced. But the more learned critical scholars are of another type altogether. Robert Browning, whose Muse has for some years been a sort of fair Salvationist, has portrayed one of these (Heyne, it is understood) in his "Christmas Eve." The hawk-nosed, high-cheekboned Professor, his hair a hake of undressed tow, whose eyes stream out like lamps from cells, reduces Browning-the-believer's pearl of price to ashes on his lecture-table; but Browning-the-poet felt

> "—as if there ran
> A shoot of love from my heart to the man—
> That sallow, virgin-minded, studious
> Martyr to mild enthusiasm,
> As he uttered a kind of cough preludious
> That woke my sympathetic spasm,
> (Beside some spitting that made me sorry,)
> And stood surveying his auditory
> With a wan, pure look, wellnigh celestial,—
> Those blue eyes had survived so much!
> While under the foot they could not smutch,
> Lay all the fleshly and the bestial."

Even the grotesque characteristics of the Göttingen professor are pathetic. I remember to have been impressed by this same fact when listening to the lectures of Renan at the College of France. So long has he sat at his task, denying himself even exercise, that his form has gathered an abnormal amount of flesh; but no sooner is his sweet voice heard, and the luminous, mystical eye turned on his auditory, than this huge form becomes spiritual,—like that of the carved Buddha in his starry rest, whose superfluity of form no doubt represents the tendency of devotees long motionless to gather flesh. Theodore Parker, who had no bodily peculiarities to excite attention,—who, walking in the country and gathering wild-flowers, might have been taken for an ordinary New England farmer,—had naturally something retractile about him, as his denunciations of slavery, and sarcasms on hypocrisy proved; but who that has known that gentle heart, that finely emotional nature, can imagine him callous, like the impossible Squire, towards suffering tenants, or harsh to the soul of an Elsmere in its sore trials? The iconoclast was softened and refined by the scholar's passion for truth. Strauss also I personally knew,—a modest, patient, sympathetic spirit, full of humanity and tenderness. For learning, and life-long devotion to a scholarly task, Strauss is the man who might have suggested that part of the Squire which so influenced Elsmere. But that part never has been combined—certainly could not be combined—with the cynicism and moral crassness of Mrs. Humphrey Ward's incredible conception. Indeed, Elsmere's

enthusiasm for the Squire appears to contradict his creator's account of the man.

I cannot help suspecting that this character,— Prospero and Caliban in one,— is, however unconsciously, thrown as a sop to the orthodox Cerberus which Mrs. Humphrey Ward had to pass on her way to rescue from the Hades of mistrust her darling theists. It may indeed be that she actually believes that extreme and learned skepticism, invading the aristocratic and wealthy class of England, might bear such baleful fruits. The character has been so interpreted by certain pulpit casuists. But neither she, nor any of her reactionary interpreters, can point to any such individual development in the annals of freethought .Nor can any thorough biblical or theological scholar, who has rejected supernaturalism, be cited as having cherished any small personal superstition such as that into which the Squire is said to have fallen. This is too much like the tracts on "The Freethinker's Death-Bed."

Is is probable that an intellect so brave and vigorous as that of the author of "Robert Elsmere" is destined to pass on to further stages in the path on which she has entered. If so she may presently find herself in the company of the shades of great men who have rejected beliefs she now cherishes. She will know them better. She will find no such figure as her Squire among them. She will find them to have been as religious in spirit as Elsmere. She will wonder at her portraiture of such, as much as she wonders — or leads us to wonder — at the notion her Catherine has of a Unitarian. It seems rare, or almost impossible, to find any thinker harboring doubts as to his or her judgment in the passing day. As Bar Homa says, none seems to dream that he may be wrong *now*. We were wrong yesterday, we may be wrong to-morrow; but now, this time, we must be right. MONCURE D. CONWAY.

THE IDEAL LIBERAL CHURCH.

THE tendency of modern liberal thought in matters pertaining to religion is strongly in favor of placing the emphasis in religious teaching upon the affairs of the present life. With the almost total collapse of the belief in hell, or eternal punishment, among intelligent people even of the Christian faith, the doctrine of the future life has ceased to be an appreciable influence in modifying human conduct. The only rational meaning which the word "salvation" retains in the mind of the modern liberal thinker, is synonymous with the term "character-building." A man's character — this is his true self; this is all there is of him which is worth "saving" or which can be saved. Whether for this life, for the larger life of the race, now or in future ages, or for any possible continuance of the personality of the individual after the death of the body, *salvation by character* is the only rational ideal of salvation for the modern liberal thinker.

Character, however, in the larger sense in which modern rational thought regards it, means more than mere goodness. It is not alone necessary that men should be taught to be truthful, honest, respectful of their neighbors' rights, chaste, obedient to law, — they must also be impressed with the duty of making the most of themselves, of beneficently using every faculty of mind and body which is a part of their manly or womanly equipment. In the lexicon of rational thinkers holiness means *wholeness* — not merely ascetic sanctity or negative moral goodness. In the light of the rising faith the scope of duty is infinitely enlarged. The modern liberal is bound to be "every inch a man," else he falls short of the true goal of his ambition. Character means nothing less than *fulness of life*, the highest possible development of all manly and womanly powers, and their greatest possible utility in action. Character is sanity, — health, — physical, mental and moral. Character is service also. And character is devotion and worship. Religion is no fraction of life, no mere matter of prayers and sacrifice — of one day's thought in seven. It is an attitude of the soul toward all the affairs of life. It is a subtle aroma which touches and ennobles every thought, which inspires every action, which yields its exhalation of blessing and good-cheer in the right exercise of every function and faculty of our divine-human nature.

The chief function of the ideal liberal church should be, therefore, to aid and abet the coming of this great salvation — this evolution of character — not only among those who voluntarily seek its fellowship, but *through* these lives given to its care, and through all possible influences, in the society in the midst of which it is established, and in the world at large. Not instruction in creeds or dogmas, in catechisms, forms or ceremonies, but *education* — the drawing out, the exercise and fulfilment, of inherent capacities, — this should be the aim of the teacher in the church of the rising faith. Christianity has placed the emphasis in its teaching upon what noble souls — one noble soul in particular — did in the past. We should place the emphasis upon what it is possible for all souls, for each individual soul, to do here and now. Christianity has drawn its inspiration chiefly from the literature of a single race and of a distant age. We should find our inspiration in the uplifting thoughts of all times and of every people, — and especially in the growing revelation of science, which, imperfectly as it has been apprehended by the masses of the people, and fragmentary as are its actual achievements in the light of future possibilities, has been the true saviour of modern society, the guiding star of the civilization of the new day.

"It shall have science for symbol and illustration," said the Concord seer, in his vision of what this ideal church should be. Much larger than this, however, it appears to us, will be the office and function of science in the ministry of the new faith. The ideal liberal church will be the mediator between the apostles of science — the discoverers, inventors and technical expositors in the field of scientific research — and the people. It will use and popularize scientific discoveries in its efforts for the improvement of society and the betterment of individual lives. The chief object of the church in former times was to teach men how to die. The chief object of the ideal liberal church will be to teach men how to live.

But the highest character, we intimated, is worshipful as well as moral. The soul that lacks reverence, that can regard the wonderful universe in which it dwells,— its constant laws and energies, its sublime unity,— without a feeling of awe, an impulse to worship, is deficient in that symmetry of character which marks the ideal of a perfect manhood. The church of the future, therefore, will recognize and foster the element of worship — not, perhaps, by formal prayers or obeisances, or by addressing the Infinite Power as if it were an Oriental monarch, to be flattered or cajoled by adulation and praise; but by reverent *thought* concerning the Source of all life, which, though we may not name it personal, includes all personality, and is greater, not less, than the highest manifestations of personal intelligence which we see and know.

Conceiving the principle of evolution as underlying the changes which take place in men's religious views, the teacher of rational religion will not confine his work to lines of negation and opposition to the errors of the old theology. He will recognize his kinship and indebtedness to the past, and emphasize the positive convictions of the new faith instead of dwelling upon the "mistakes" of ancient compilations and the irrationalities of orthodox theology. Of these, and kindred topics, upon adequate occasion, he will speak his mind frankly and freely; but his work will be mainly constructive, not destructive. He will build upon the foundations of truth which have been laid by the thinkers and prophets of past ages, broadened

and universalized in the light of modern scientific and critical thought.

Under the ruins of ancient Troy, Dr. Schliemann tells us, are two buried cities of unknown antiquity; above them, another and yet another habitation of men has been builded and has gone to decay. Over all, the grass grows green and beautiful, trees put forth their leaves and bear fruit, men and women dwell in peaceful homes, unmindful of this storied past, which erst has quickened the dust beneath their feet. So shall it be with religion; yet not altogether so. For unlike the inhabitants of those buried cities who dreamed not of the ruins beneath them, or of the new life to spring and flourish above their own decay, the dweller in this City of Light — the Ideal Church — shall be gratefully conscious of all that he owes to the faiths which he has outgrown, and modestly mindful of the larger truth which shall greet the clearer mental vision of the coming day.

Will he call himself "Christian"? Doubtless not; he will not be anxious about names, save that they shall truthfully symbolize and interpret his thought. But "anti-christian"? Nay, not so; no more than manhood is "anti-childhood," or than the growing grain is opposed to the seed from which it sprung, or to the earth in which its rootlets seek, not in vain, for nourishment. Being a man, he will put away childish things; but being an honest, manly man, tender of heart and clear of eye, he will never despise the home of his childhood, or the mother who nourished him and guided his infant steps.

Lewis G. Janes.

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

It is an interesting circumstance that the most prominent educational question now agitating the people of Boston appears in various forms in all the principal countries which have attempted to form a system of public education,— in Germany, in Italy, notably in France, and at this present moment with renewed vigor in England. This shows that it is not an arbitrary rule that is to be discussed, but that great principles are to be considered which necessarily affect education everywhere.

The trouble comes largely from the fact that religion, which is an inward concern of the mind and heart, is held to be an outward affair belonging to politics and the State. When any one asserts that religion should have supreme control in our lives, meaning thereby that all our words, thoughts and deeds should be guided by a spirit of loyalty to the highest truth known to us, he utters an indisputable truth. It is only in that sense that the axiom, "The only true government is a Theocracy," has any validity. But when any outward representative of religion, be it King, Czar, Priest, Synod, Llama, or Kaliph, claims that he has a divine right to rule, the common-sense of the people revolts at once from this materialization of a spiritual truth.

In the first sense we can no more keep religion out of our schools than we can the oxygen of the air. The efficiency of every teacher, the progress of every pupil, will depend upon the doing of their work in this spirit. The little girl knew "she had got religion, because she swept under the mat"; and no pupil faithfully performs a difficult task instead of seeking surreptitious aid, no teacher bends down again to revise the weary examination papers more thoroughly, but in the spirit of religion. But this religion does not depend upon books, or forms, or articles of faith; and it is the imposition of these that has made the trouble in arranging the exercises of the schools.

We believe that there is no tenable ground upon which Free Public Education can stand, but that upon which our Constitution was founded,— the entire separation of church and State. Those who believe that God is found only in the churches, the rituals, the bibles of the world, may call schools Godless which are devoted only to training our youth to the control of their intellectual powers, and to habits of attention, industry, honesty, and good behavior; but those who believe in the omnipresence of God,— in the "immanence" of the Eternal in all life and all work,—will not ask whether teachers cry "Lord, Lord," but whether they are faithfully doing the work set them to do, "with all their might."

I always smile when I pass by stores devoted to the sale of "religious things,"— finding little propriety in thus classing the various pictures and emblems and books and ornaments that may be found there. "Pure religion and undefiled" is not for sale. But it may be found in our schools, when the weary teacher goes out of her way to seek the missing pupil kept away by poverty or sickness, that she may give him comfort or help; when she calls the naughty, discouraged boy to her, and shows him how he may build his own career and become a noble man, or kindles the hope of the dullard by showing him how to use the little power he has, and gain more thereby. Of such religion we cannot have too much in our schools. But of that kind which expends itself in zeal for theological formula and church observance, we should like to have all school-committee men and teachers reply as Dr. Franklin did when asked, "What religion have you?" "Not any — to speak of."

Ednah D. Cheney.

FOR THE PARTY'S SAKE.

Though the great American disease has not yet had a name, we know it by its manifestations. The recent passage of a great political campaign renews conviction to many and brings it to many more.

Whence came majority-worship? Whither can it — must it — lead? We know too well that to ask a question is not to answer it. But he who reads truth by media that lie close upon even the commonest ways we pursue can not but see the dark threads that speed into the fabric of our national life. Our civilization has played havoc with kings, — overthrown certain old political philosophies, — achieved or confirmed to freedom an area unparalleled. Theology knocked down the personal Pope and set up its Bible. Politics cut the monarchic claim to shreds and put into its place majority-forces. How much have we added to the sum total of success — of success as measured morally, in its long-transacting race-effects? Our parallel forces this further interrogation: If Pope led to Bible, and modern thought, in the interest of freedom, threatens the overthrow of the Bible from official functions, why should not the corresponding political transition from king to majority — the present conception of the ballot — come in for similar restatement?

Life is not made up of a lot of detached energies. There is no such thing in the Universe as an isolated fact. The disease that more and more affects us is no solitary one, prevailing in some localized sphere. Emerson plainly perceived its ramifications. Herbert Spencer is untiring in his exposition of its dangers. Yet we are assured by modern philosophers that to consider the individual as of any primary importance is growing old-fashioned. Thence comes spiritual evacuation. The spirit goes out of a man when the man goes into a party. Upon the spirit of party is based barrier, de-humanization. Illustration is so easy that it seems common. Accuse a party man of his party's sin; he shrugs his shoulders and refers you to the leaders or to the machine. Tell a party man that his managers have tampered with returns, or that votes have in some way been bartered for by his familiars. Well, — hasn't the other fellow equally offended? Then note: party men forgive crime, but they don't forgive a mistaken policy: they can overlook unscrupulousness, but woe be if you issue a tariff-reform message before its time!

The party man is omnipresent. He constrains the sects. The sects hide their own sins — make much of the sins of opponents. I have known an editor to print matter of

marked literary and philosophic merit, who, when some conscienceless pilferer appropriated its strong features, dared not publicly condemn because the guilty man was one of his own party. Had the thief belonged to the enemy! But he did not. The first motive, therefore, that the party man presses upon you is this: Keep peace in your own family — help drive war upon the family of another — scandal is not scandal with us, but scandal in the enemy is scandalous. If there's a vital difference of policy arising, hide it, suppress it — do anything to keep it out of the public eye. Let every man take refuge back of a set of resolutions. It is so much easier to do that than to stand alone! All is for the party's sake.

Consider the religious party man — the Baptist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Unitarian party man: indeed, of all men, consider most, as being most edifying, the final, the "Liberal" appropriators of "spirituality," who at the last ditch still start the cry of the creeds after the unfortunate man who accepts their word for freedom at its face promise. There was a time when we heard much strung upon that querying phrase, Rome or Reason? Then the phrase fell into discredit. It was deemed narrow. But civilization, accepting the alternative after its own larger standards, insists that this question can never cease to have its pertinency. Who shall say that between man and Nature even a swallow shall soar? There must be unbroken approach.

Warfare unties no knots that could not better be untied by peace. The world comes to acknowledge it. How soon will this overwhelming appeal to the ballot yield to the like persuasion? We have reached the point now that we accept battle only when it forces its arbitrament upon us; but we hug the ballot in peace and war as though with it gone, life, hope, were gone. Dismissing a theological, a military, we appropriate a political "saviour."

No one any longer pretends that a man's moral ineptitude can be proved by knocking him done. Yet we join, sunder, harry men by our legal humors, — hold the shillalah of our majorities over their heads, — in all the ways they walk; justifying one legal poison with another. We contend that the functions of government are, in short, what the majority determines they shall be. For ourselves, we resist any encroachment we see (who shall count those we do not see?), but for the other fellows, why, — they have the right to vote and submit: isn't that enough? We band together for defined purposes; there arises within our lines an issue that threatens those purposes; we debate, vote, are whipped — perhaps by a single "yea": then we make peace with our souls — not by protest, but by acquiescence in a plea of irresponsibility. Our party life runs in that round — appropriates from every man that part of him fairest in solitude and ruined in combinations.

There are parties and parties; I realize their significance, and perceive the supreme human efficacy that resides in concentration. But surely, there must something of pain be stirred when one is present to the personal surrenders all about him to exigencies, majorities, sect-votes, party decisions. Our babes seem to come into the world with this charge upon their souls: be duly respectful of majorities; appreciate that three men are always, whatever the conditions, worth more than two; tie yourself beyond recall to the slavery of the mass; don't believe you have any private virtues, liberties — all are resolved into the common fund; be chary of freedom; apprehend — vice is not yours, nor virtue: vice, virtue, must be custom's, the party's, the State's, the church's! It is as though we deliberately started our children by putting out their eyes. No broad statement of the evil can be too strong. Emerson old-fashioned? Walt Whitman, when he says, "Bring me not institutions, but the fact back of institutions," effete? What can the world hope to accomplish out of a disrespect for personality? Since when was Nature gone out the door of our necessities? There yet stands but one appeal: and appeal, appellant, monition, are one and are never to be escaped. An abdicated personality never becomes a public benefit. We all claim to be working for social ends — the ends of city, nation, world. But the first step we essay towards that end predicates the sacrifice of the only contribution that could be of value in the common fund. New fashions may read truth backward, but as long as individuals are "a bad lot," communities cannot be virtuous. Nature laughs us to scorn when we contravene this first — perhaps only — fact in her store. HORACE L. TRAUBEL.

"PURE RELIGION."

"PURE religion is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted," says the epistle of James. If this is the only attempt made in the Bible to state definitely what religion is, it is a highly successful one. The epistle to the Galatians epitomizes the whole matter of human duty by saying that "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The definition of religion in James is identical in meaning with the summarized statement in Galatians. Pure religion is that love which visits benedictions and beneficence upon the mourning and "the fatherless and those that have none to help"; while it keeps itself "unspotted."

Is not this the religion that is needed to-day? Mixed religion, as distinguished from pure religion, may include theories of the universe, true or false. If any have no griefs, no poverty, no ignorance, no want, no sin, pure religion would not require for them our blessing with the same emphasis that it is required for the afflicted and the fatherless. If Galatians and James are correct it will be found exceedingly difficult to distinguish between morality and religion. "All the law is fulfilled," if, "unspotted," one possesses the love which seeks out the sorrowing and the needy and loves the neighbor as self. These constitute the whole. Recognizing simple self-preservation as the prime law of man's nature, self-love is made the standard or unit of measure of our duties to our brother man. Legend, however, wisely attributes the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" to a murderer.

Immoral acts are those which work ill to men. But this must be taken with wide range, and in the long run. This ill-working was discovered by experience. Humanity learned its lessons at a terrible cost. In process of time it was found that lying and dishonesty, theft and murder, fornication and adultery, wrought evil, not to the victim only, but to the evil-doer as well. The result of this experience crystallized itself into commandments; and thus the law was given, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not." But true love, a real mother-love or brother-love, "never faileth" to impel men away from that which they see will victimize the loved, and toward that which they perceive will ennoble, uplift and help. Thus "love is the fulfilling of the law," and is the pure religion.

I doubt if antiquity anywhere furnishes a profounder statement in regard to the fundamental principles of human life and human duty. It follows that the Unknown Source, which does not need our devotion for itself, is best served by our devotion to mankind. "All we are his offspring." And again, "God is not worshiped as if he needed anything," said Paul to the Athenians. The psalmist well represents him as saying, "If I were hungry I would not tell thee." We must direct our service where it is needed, not where it is not needed. The true and acceptable worship is purity of life in the service of man. "Not he that saith Lord, Lord, but he that doeth." And "whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant."

Religion, *religare*, "to bind again," is a cord whose two ends are conscience and love, by which a man is bound to do the right and the good. PERRY MARSHALL.

"ROBERT ELSMERE."

No novels have been talked about so much, during the last six months, as three in which religion is treated in ways that are as far as possible from conventional. In at least one sea-side hotel, people were passing "John Ward" from hand to hand with such eager interest as to make it finally necessary never to speak of the book except as "it." So they used to say, "How soon can you get *it?*" "But when you do read *it*, please don't talk about *it* at table." Such an exciting topic had to be reserved for the piazzas; and there it was kept flying to and fro like a shuttle-cock. Much less notice has been received or deserved by "The Story of an African Farm," which is morally by no means unobjectionable, but contains some passages, like the touching parable describing the search for truth, worthy of permanent preservation in separate form.

Chief among the three in popularity, as well as in ethical and artistic merit, stands "Robert Elsmere." Its circulation in this country alone has exceeded twenty-five thousand copies; it is said to have furnished more texts than the Bible, this fall, for Boston preachers; Gladstone has been among its reviewers; and the Unitarian ladies of Concord meet once a week to hear its pages read and expounded in their vestry. Who can say how many good people are finding out that what they supposed to be self-evident truths, are in reality open questions, about which there is a great deal to be said on both sides? More than one clergyman may yet be forced to feel, as Elsmere does, about "standing up Sunday after Sunday to say the things one does *not* believe," and "using words as a convention which those who hear you receive as literal truth."

Another great moral lesson which this novel teaches, is the duty of subordinating differences in opinion to the claims of wedded love. The same theme is handled in "John Ward"; but there the believer is not reunited until on his death-bed to the wife whom he had shut out from their home on account of her disbelief in hell, though all the while he loved her with his whole heart. Mrs. Elsmere is equally intolerant at first, but is gradually brought, by seeing how much good her husband is doing in spite of his adoption of what she thinks infidelity, to come finally to assist him in his own peculiar work, yet without ceasing to be loyal to her church. Mr. Gladstone blames her inconsistency; but it is far less censurable than a consistency like John Ward's. It is largely due to such compromises that religious wars have ceased.

But what can be said in defence of the compromise between faith and reason finally adopted by Elsmere, as "a new social bond," "a new compelling force in man and society"? Who of us can imagine thirty or forty workingmen, who have been regularly to hear Secularist lectures and circulate Ingersoll's works and a Comic Life of Christ, as being brought over by an attempt to eliminate the miracles from the story of Jesus; to agree with such assertions as, "All that is most essential to man — all that saves the soul, all that purifies the heart — that he has still for you and me, as he had it for the men and women of his own time"; and finally to join "The New Brotherhood of Christ," wear a silver badge bearing Jesus' head, meet every Sunday to recite prayers, sing hymns, and listen to sermons on the Gospel narratives, and then go home to repeat a text at every meal! Nothing in Haggard's stories or Jules Verne's is more improbable than that the first call for names of members of this Brotherhood should have drawn in "for two hours a continuous stream of human beings." Men and women who have deliberately thought their way entirely out of the circle of Christian traditions and ceremonies are not to be brought back so easily; and it would be almost as difficult to persuade those who love the time-hallowed ceremonies to discard them in favor of new ones. Elsmere's friends are right in calling his new religion "an ugly anachorism," and saying, "I never yet came across a religious novelty that seemed to me to have a leg of logic to stand on." Here in Boston we have heard quite enough of such Utopias.

So flimsy an expedient to redeem "a time when a religion which can no longer be believed clashes with a skepticism full of danger to conduct," and to comfort "the hearts of men who can neither accept fairy-tales, nor reconcile themselves to a world without faith," could not have been seriously proposed by any author who really understood the strength of the movement which she hopes to crush.

All the parts of her novel are so artistically interwoven, that it would be doing her an injustice to suppose that she has no purpose in making all her religious people live highly philanthropic, resolute, and, despite their trials, happy lives; while the irreligious live in aimless struggle, indolent uncertainty, misanthropic seclusion, or gross vice. Her most fascinating character, Rose, wavers for a time between the attractions of these sinners, and the saints; but the latter finally made her their prize. After much endeavor to see why Robert Elsmere is killed off at the end of the story, I am reduced to the supposition that it is in order to contrast the joy of his last hours with the darkness of those of the sceptical author, Squire Wendover. If he and Madame de Netteville are the best possible types of unbelief, it is possible to hope that it may be extirpated by inviting people to wear silver badges, and hear rationalistic lectures on the Gospels. But the lives of Harriet Martineau and Marian Evans, of Lincoln, Darwin, Humboldt, Owen, Comte, and Voltaire, show that there is too much of practical philanthropy, of faith in human capacities, of scientific knowledge, of steady purpose and of practical common-sense in the movement which they have led, to make its progress "full of danger to conduct," or its arrest a task easily accomplished either by the ancient methods or by Elsmere's novelties.

F. M. HOLLAND.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PROBABLY to the many old friends of the *Index* there will be no more welcome contents in this issue of THE NEW IDEAL than the sentences which follow, from recent letters to the editor. No excuse, therefore, is necessary for the space devoted to them; nor will any of the writers, we feel, hold that in the printing of their cordial words we have betrayed any trust. Even where, occasionally, the paragraphs seem close and personal, their drift is, in reality, still general: it is the paper, not the editor, that calls them forth.

[From B. F. UNDERWOOD, Editor Chicago *Graphic*, Chicago.]

"I wish you all possible success in your enterprise, and will aid you in any way I can. You may announce me among the contributors. I admire your enthusiasm and courage."

[From F. M. HOLLAND, Concord, Mass.]

"I am delighted to hear that Boston is to have a successor to the *Index*. You are perfectly welcome to announce me as a regular contributor."

[From WM. J. POTTER, New Bedford, Mass.]

"Such a publication as you plan is needed. It is, I believe, earnestly desired by a very considerable number of thoughtful radicals here in the East. Whatever value the substitutes which were tried for the *Index* may have, I am satisfied they do not take the place of that paper to a majority of its old readers and friends. Most heartily, therefore, I want to help you in this enterprise."

[From FRANCIS E. ABBOT, Ph.D., Cambridge, Mass.]

"With all my heart I sympathize with your proposal to found a high-class paper in Boston, devoted to *constructive* liberalism. One or two numbers of your NEW IDEAL have come to me, which I have read with interest. You shall have my heartiest friendship if you mean *real construction* in liberal thought, and have at heart the interests of truth as well as of freedom. By 'real construction' I mean constructive *thought*, which must precede all constructive *ideals of individual or social life*. I have no sympathy with that self-complacent liberalism which conceives itself to have already attained, and does not perceive that its attainment is yet to be achieved. Positive *ideas* respecting the true constitution of the universe as a whole, and man's relation to it, are the only possible foundation for true ethical *ideals*."

[From JAMES VILA BLAKE, Chicago, Ill.]

"I am quite overwhelmed at this new proof of your tireless activity. You seem like some irrepressible engine, or like a breeze from the tropics that must have its way. The breeze comes from a warm spirit in you, I know. I wish your enterprise all success."

[From Mrs. EDNAH D. CHENEY, Jamaica Plain, Mass.]

"I am certainly much interested in the idea of a new paper to replace the *Index*, which I valued very much and which I decidedly miss. I find no other paper that fills its place, and I feel that even the few months that have passed (or is it years?) since it stopped, have brought up new points which show the practical need of Free Religious principles, and demand an organ to enunciate and apply them. There should indeed be a new generation to take up the ark and carry it on."

[From LEWIS G. JANES, author of "A Study of Primitive Christianity," etc., etc., New York.]

"I heartily approve of your project for THE NEW IDEAL. We have had nothing so satisfactory as the *Index* since its demise, and I hope you will be abundantly successful. I trust you will be able to establish the paper ultimately on a sound financial basis."

[From H. M. SIMMONS, Minneapolis, Minn.]

"I wish your paper success; and judging from your previous writing it will have my sympathy."

[From CHARLES K. WHIPPLE, Newburyport, Mass.]

"I am exceedingly gratified to hear of your plans for publishing in Boston a paper with such an aim, and such cleanness of management, as we had in the *Index*. I shall gladly be a contributor to it, and I deem it an honor to be associated with the gentlemen you have named."

[From WM. C. GANNETT, Hinsdale, Ill.]

"I should think there was place in Boston for a paper of the kind you'll try for. May it win the success and do the good you hope!"

[From EDWIN D. MEAD, Boston, Mass.]

"I am certainly much interested in your new undertaking here in Boston. I wish the paper all good fortune."

[From B. W. BALL, Rochester, N. H.]

"I am delighted with your project of establishing a paper similar in character to the late *Index*. My heart and brain are interested in the discussion of high themes. You may regard me as one of your contributors."

[From JOHN W. CHADWICK, Brooklyn, N. Y.]

"A capital name. I shall watch with interest the course of your new enterprise, and wish for it all good success."

[From CHARLES D. B. MILLS, author of "The Tree of Mythology," etc., etc., Syracuse, N. Y.]

"I am much gratified to learn that you propose to start such a paper as you describe, and shall trust that it may reach full success. I have long felt the want of something that should fill the void made by the demise of the *Index*, and I doubt not you will meet the need. The names you have secured are of the very best. There are none, certainly, in our country who seem to me to have hit so nearly the white as they, in what they have written in the *Index* and elsewhere. I have long regarded them and their fellows as the harbingers of the coming Kingdom of Good. The thought they stand for ought to be voiced, as it is not at present. I trust you will find good pecuniary backing. Yourself I have known in reputation for years, and have desired to come nearer and make acquaintance more fully. I shall hope now to learn more of your thought, and to feel, what is the one thing vital for us all, the 'Uplift.' I shall owe your enterprise all good-will."

[From Hon. GEO. F. TALBOT, Author of "Jesus: His Opinions and Character," Portland, Me.]

"I am glad to learn of your purpose to take up and carry on the work of the *Index*, and feel sure you will have the sympathy and aid of all its old friends. I have greatly missed its inspiring lessons, having found "——" by no means up to its standard in ability and interest. I should be glad to know there was again a live journal of the former kind."

[From SAMUEL BURNS WESTON, Lecturer for the Philadelphia Society for Ethical Culture.]

"I am very much interested to hear that THE NEW IDEAL is to be continued under such favorable auspices. The place of the *Index* has not yet been filled, and there is great need of a journal that will take up and carry on its excellent work. Your paper will have from the outset my heartiest wishes for its success."

[From H. L. TRAUBEL, Camden, N. J.]

"You have my heart for your task. You have a clear field: may your cultivation be blessed! Command me for what you may, where my heart or brain or arm can serve it will gladly be present. I presume the absolute freedom of THE NEW IDEAL."

[From WM. LLOYD GARRISON, Boston.]

"In your enterprise I wish you much success. I shall be glad of course to subscribe for it, and to commend it to others as it commends itself to me. With the list of contributors named I know it cannot fail to interest."

[From WM. M. SALTER, Lecturer for the Chicago Society for Ethical Culture.]

"You are certainly a plucky man, and I admire your spirit. Count me as a subscriber."

[From JOHN C. LEARNED, St. Louis, Mo.]

"I shall be glad to see something rise which will in some degree gather the thought and exemplify the spirit of the *Index*. And if you can call about you the former writers of that journal, there are many places where your paper will find a welcome and meet a want. Reckon me as one of your subscribers."

[From GEO. W. BUCKLEY, Monroe, Wis.]

"It is a pleasant surprise to me, and I hasten to assure you of my interest. If I can be of service I shall be glad."

[From ROWLAND CONNOR, East Saginaw, Mich.]

"I am delighted to hear of your venture, and hope you may meet financial backing enough to make it a success. You can put me on your list of subscribers, and I will also agree to contribute."

[From Capt. ROBERT C. ADAMS, Montreal, Can.]

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BOOK REVIEWS.

The Law of Equivalents, in its relation to Political and Social Ethics. By Edward Payson. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888. Pp. 306, $2.00.

If the sale of a book were always commensurate with its good-sense and helpfulness, this book would go through many editions. If the hundred thousand young men of the day, now either absolutely dawdling, or, at best, through vacuity of thought and irresoluteness of will, accomplishing little, were serious enough to wish to learn how wisely, progressively, prosperously to live and to work,—making the most of themselves, and of whatever ability they have, without further waiting for "luck" or further dependent expectation of very much of something in the world in return for very little of nothing first resolutely given,—there would be a hundred thousand copies of this volume sold (one for each of the hundred thousand young men) by the time so many could be printed and bound. For this reason alone it is a book the people of America, especially its young men, need; a book we have been waiting for and are glad of,—namely: because it points out so much of what, in the author's phraseology, is undeniably "romance" in modern politics, law, religion, business;—though instead of "romance" he might well have said, more strongly, gross exaggeration, false expectation, folly. But all this is a small part of the good in the book. It not only shows that the Law of Equivalents is, in the nature of things, dominant in all departments of public note above enumerated; it not only demonstrates that in business and public life, and matters of social reform, good things, things of value, come only as sequences of antecedent things likewise good and of value, and never through bluster, partisan advocacy, meretricious advertising, highly colored misrepresentation, flaunting presumption; it deals also with matters that come closer home to every man than any mere "world's affairs" or politics or law can come. In Bacon's phrase, it deals with things that "come home to men's own business and bosoms." It shows the Law of Equivalents in the family, in marriage, in matters of personal purity,—in the school, the church,—with relation to time, to thought, to education,—in a word to the making of nobly-rounded, manly men. We greet the author cordially, and wish his book wide reading. His, as well as ours, is a "New Ideal." Be it his and ours to see, slowly, the Ideal becoming the Real.

Show us the Father. Six Discourses, by M. J. Savage, Samuel R. Calthrop, H. M. Simmons, J. W. Chadwick, Wm. C. Gannett, Jenkin Lloyd Jones. Chicago: C. H. Kerr & Co., 1888. Cloth, 16mo., 170 pages, $1.00.

We have small patience with the title of this book as a whole, but the subjects within, and especially their contents, atone in large part for the weakness (as we deem it) of the general title. The discourses are all "Conference" discourses, and hence are of the best. From the authors' names alone, even without looking within, we should know the series to be of value and well worth perusal. The discourses, in the order of the writers' names as given above, are "The Change of Front of the Universe," "The Fullness of God," "The Unity of God," "The Revelation of God," "The Faith of Ethics," "Religion from the Near End." A series of value, we said; and it is of value. The discourses are full of beauty, rhetorical, intellectual, spiritual. They evince, every one of them, the literary instinct, and they thrill with the true religious spirit. Yet have we one severe suggestion to make,—severe because important, and important because touching closely what we deem the highest interests of liberal religion, and therefore the highest welfare of men. The suggestion, moreover, applies not alone to the discourses in this small volume, but

equally to almost all of the modern Unitarian literature extant, of the advanced type. (To the "old-fashioned" Unitarianism still existing it is unnecessary to refer, for from it we no longer expect anything progressive.) The suggestion is this: that for the expression of the thought to be conveyed, some other word than the word "God" would be much more properly used in these, and all other discourses, by the liberal speakers and writers who now, simply for "convenience," or for convention's sake, make use of the term in question. For the "God" here is *not* the God which men in general know by that name. The "God" here in these pages yearned after, and sought, and found, and rejoiced in, is a something far higher and nobler, and more to be desired, than the ordinary religious man would suspect, or could possibly hope for, from what he could by any means have in mind as "God." It would be well, and wise, where possible, not to brand new, sweet, nutritious bread with brands widely known to mark in general only inferior, mouldy grades of goods. Give the fresh new bread its rightful and deserved designation, and people would *know* it to be something fresh and desirable, and would buy more of it—would go and sell all else that they have to buy more of it. And shortly, moreover, they would take no more dry crusts, or time-eaten, half-decomposed fragments, at any price. Mix, however, superior and inferior together, naming all by one name, and how shall the lot be offered, or how shall a choice be made? Shall it even be "averaged"? Nay, not even that. The wormy will shortly corrupt the fresh and sweet,—*all* will be "inferior," it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Brothers, the Majestic Presence of the universe, as revealed in latter-day scientific vision, is too high and fair and helpful and meaningful to be labeled any longer with the label of ignorant, superstitious years! With the label goes all the burden of the word's dark, century-laden connotations. For us who know what those connotations are (and they are burned ineradicably into the popular mind as well as into the minds of scholars) the higher in the word *cannot* overbalance the lower. As for that still more reprehensible word, "Father,"—as Dr. Hedge, even, says: "God is *not* our Father!" Let the emphasis speak to us, and we henceforth be true! Let us speak what we know and what we mean, so as to be understood if we may. And the eager, waiting world, as patiently we strive constructing the something better, will bless the hour which brought us and them the new light and inspiration. The "Change of Front of the Universe" will then *mean* "Fullness," and "Unity," and "Revelation" (Discovery?), and "Ethics," and we shall begin to *have* "Religion from the Near End."

The Critical Period of American History. 1783–1789. By John Fiske. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888. Pp. 368, with Index. $2.00.

On hearing the news of the treaty of 1783, the author of *The Crisis* at once stopped his publication, with the remark, "The times that tried men's souls are over. So mighty was the relief, after the long years of struggle, privation and discouragement, that the treaty itself seemed the end. But it was only the beginning. Even three years later, Jay wrote to Washington, June 27, 1786, "I am uneasy and apprehensive, more so than during the war." Far, then, from the crisis being over in 1783, "the next five years," as Mr. Fiske abundantly demonstrates, "were to be the most critical of all." In his preface he quotes the similar thought of Mr. Trescot, in the latter's "Diplomatic History of the Administration of Washington and Adams," a book Mr. Fiske had not seen when he himself wrote: "It must not be supposed that the treaty of peace secured the national life. Indeed it would be more correct to say that the most critical period of the country's history embraced the time between 1783 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1788." It is this important period that the new volume by Mr. Fiske covers,—a period most know little about. In his preface he modestly says, In its present shape the book may serve as a "sketch" of the times under review. "It makes no pretentions to completeness." But the author has "aimed especially at grouping facts in such a way as to bring out and emphasize their causal sequence," and from our own examination of the work we are sure the writer is not likely to be disappointed in his hope "that the book may prove useful to the student of American history." The volume is uniform with most of Mr. Fiske's other books as issued by the same publishers, the neat binding and fine, large type making the work a pleasure to own and read.

Pamphlet of the Brooklyn Ethical Association. Eighth Year. Season 1888–1889.

In the past, as we have learned from time to time what was going on there in a religious and scientific way, we have often thought that a home in Mr. Chadwick's Society in Brooklyn furnishes unequaled opportunities in the way of incentives to modern duty and devoted life. We have just now received, from the president of the "Brooklyn Ethical Association," connected with the Society mentioned, the Eighth Annual Programme of its winter's work. The contents of the little pamphlet, filling 24 pages, make us wish more than ever that Brooklyn were not so far away—or that the Association would remove to Boston. The present course of study comprises a carefully planned series of essays and readings, on the subject of *Evolution*, and furnishes material for sixteen alternate Sunday evening meetings. Biographical matters touching Spencer and Darwin occupy two evenings, whereupon follow, at successive gatherings, Cosmic Evolution, Evolution of the Earth, of Vegetal Life, of Animal Life, the Descent of Man, Evolution of Mind, the Growth of Language, Evolution of Society, of Theology, of Morals, Proofs of Evolution, Evolution as Related to Religious Thought, the Philosophy of Evolution, the Effects of Evolution on the Coming Civilization. Different able Essayists are to open the several topics with carefully prepared papers, whereupon general discussion will follow. It is no wonder that Mr. Spencer himself is interested in the course, nor that he suggests that at the close of the season the Essays entire be printed in cheap popular form. In a private letter to The New Ideal, Dr. Janes said lately: "The first three essays, already delivered, have been exceedingly fine, and if the rest of the course equals its beginnings it will present the best condensed and popular exposition of the Evolution Philosophy with which I am acquainted." And he adds (we quote for the benefit of our readers), "I shall gladly bear in mind anything in the course which I think you may like to print." We presume that any one wishing to own the pamphlet-programme,—and it is of permanent value on account of the comprehensive list of references for reading appended to the statement of each topic,—may secure one by addressing the president, Dr. Lewis G. Janes, 55 Liberty street, New York.

NOTES.

The "Union of Societies for Ethical Culture," organized in Chicago, Nov., 1887, will hold its first Annual Convention in Philadelphia during the last week of January, 1889. The Convention will begin Friday, Jan. 25th, and will continue three days. There will be reports of the work done in the various Ethical Societies, and two or three special public meetings which will be addressed by prominent liberal speakers and the lecturers of the Ethical Societies.

A London paper says: "A Christian traveler finds that there are at least three tombs of John the Baptist in various parts of Palestine, and two editions of the 'well' into which Joseph was cast by his brethren." And it then asks, "Who will now venture to disbelieve scripture stories thus doubly and trebly confirmed?"

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We have found liberality surpassing the liberality of many professed liberals! For many years—perhaps fifteen—we have read weekly *The Christian Union*, of New York City. And it has often been our thought that we know of no other "religious" paper, on either side of the ocean, that is likely to do so great a good as this one in the liberalizing of men. This is our thought renewed. The paper is ostensibly "evangelical," but it is also "independent,"—and it has an increasingly large circulation. It is ready to support even conscientious "free thought," and it is a friend to every man who stands earnestly for truth and progress *as he sees these*, whether it be in politics, in religion, or in temperance, and whether the *Union* itself be or be not in accord with the views expressed. In the case of a college-president, with whom large fault was lately found by some of the alumni for declaring publicly his political preferences, which happened not to be the preferences of the objectors, the editor says:

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